

Attorney Docket No.: FMCE-P094

Remarks

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 7-12, 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Burke (U.S. Patent No. 4,273,471). However, independent claims 1 and 17 have been amended to more clearly distinguish applicant's invention over this patent. Thus, with respect to claims 1 and 17, Burke does not disclose a mudmat foundation which includes a number of legs *that are inserted into the sea floor as the mudmat is lowered into position on the sea floor*. Burke's legs 22, 24 are not inserted into the sea floor. To the contrary, legs 22, 24 pivot into a *horizontal* position relative to the main section 21 to thereby increase the bearing area of the entire sub-base assembly 20 on the sea floor (see Figure 3).

Therefore, claims 1 and 17 are not anticipated by Burke. Furthermore, since claims 7-12 and 18 depend from claims 1 and 17, they are not anticipated by Burke for the reasons stated above.

Claims 1, 2, 7-12, 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Jones (U.S. Patent No. 6,749,371). With respect to independent claims 1 and 17, however, Jones does not disclose a mudmat foundation which includes a number of legs *that are inserted into the sea floor as the mudmat is lowered into position on the sea floor*. Instead, Jones' legs 28 are deployed horizontally relative to the hub portion 26 to thereby increase the footprint of the assembly (see Figures 2 and 7).

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Therefore, claims 1 and 17 are not anticipated by Jones. Furthermore, since claims 2, 7-12 and 18 depend from claims 1 and 17, they are not anticipated by Jones for the reasons stated above.

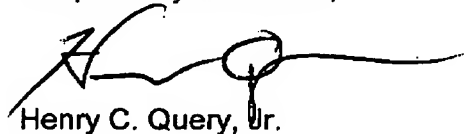
The Examiner has indicated that claims 3-6, 13-16, 19 and 20 would be allowed if they are rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of their base and intervening claims. However, these claims depend from claims 1 and 17, which applicant maintains are allowable. Therefore, applicant submits that these claims do not need to be rewritten.

The prior art made of record but not relied upon has been considered but is not believed to be pertinent to the patentability of the current claims.

In light of the foregoing, claims 1 – 20 are submitted as allowable.

Favorable action is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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